

These 2 Wigeons sometimes flock together

BY BRUCE MCCAMMON

American Wigeons start to show up in Wenatchee in August or September. By December they are one of the most common birds

you can see if you visit Walla Walla Point Park or walk along the Loop trail toward Pybus Market.

Canada Geese may be the only species that outnumber the Wigeons.

Wigeons and Mallards both take full advantage of any small ponds in the grass area and can be seen grazing without too much concern about humans who are in the area.

That is, until a child or dog runs toward the flock. Then all sorts of commotion ensues as the birds fly away.

You'll hear their distinctive call as they lift off. To me, it sounds like the classic "rubber ducky" bathtub toy.

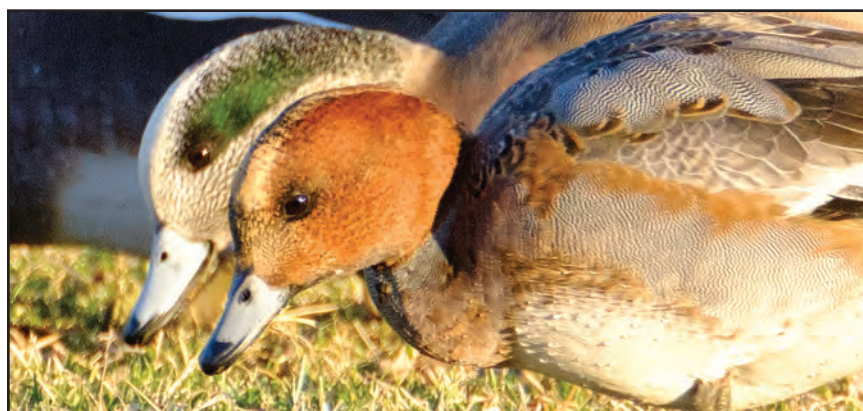
As a quasi-birder, I learned to



Bruce McCammon is retired, color-blind and enjoys photographing the birds in north central Washington.



A pair of American Wigeons fly away.



A male Eurasian Wigeon — with a red head in the foreground — and a male American Wigeon eat together.

take my time scanning a large flock of American Wigeons. Every once in a while there will be a Eurasian Wigeon sprinkled in with the others.

It is fairly uncommon to see Eurasian Wigeons, so ticking one or more off on a list of birds

seen in any year is always a nice addition.

It is fairly easy to find the Eurasian Wigeons in a large flock — if you know what to look for.

Eurasian Wigeons seem to prefer to be on the edge of a large group.

Male American Wigeons have a green band that extends from the back of the eye to the neck and a gray head with a white central stripe. Eurasian Wigeons have a reddish head with a more buff-colored central stripe.

The Wigeon flocks will usually be gone from our area by mid-May.

Now is a good time to easily see them in local parks adjacent to rivers or ponds. You'll spot a large group of Wigeons and hear them squeaking as they forage on the grass. If you have binoculars, scan through the group to see if there are any birds with a distinctive red head. With luck, you'll be able to point out a Eurasian Wigeon to someone. They'll appreciate seeing it.